

Name: **Chalk Hills WY-030-26N77W2-2012**

FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory Findings on Record

1. Is there existing BLM wilderness inventory information on all or part of this area?

No ☐ X ☒ Yes ☐ _____ (if yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the names of those areas):

a) Inventory Source: N/A _____

b) Inventory Area Name(s)/Number(s): _ N/A _____

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): N/A

d) BLM District (s)/Field Office(s): __ N/A

2. BLM Inventory Finds on Record:

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory area is associated with the area, list each area and answer each question individually for each inventory area):

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

a. Area Number/Name: **Chalk Hills WY-030-26N77W2-2012** Acreage 11,147.26

(1) Is the area of sufficient size?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Describe the boundaries of the area (roads, property lines, etc.). If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception. If more than one inventory area is involved, list the acres in each and evaluate each area/sub-area separately. In completing steps (1) – (5), use additional space as necessary.

The unit is bound on the north and southwest by Albany County Rd. 619. The unit is bound on the west by Albany County Rd. 62. The unit is bound on the east by Albany County Rd. 610. The unit is bound on the south and southwest by private and state land.

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS: The Chalk Hills area under consideration is 11147.26 acres of BLM public land. The unit contains the following townships:

TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION	TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION
t26n	r77w	2	t27n	r77w	24
t26n	r77w	3	t27n	r77w	23
t27n	r76w	33	t27n	r77w	22
t27n	r77w	35	t27n	r77w	21
t27n	r77w	34	t27n	r77w	20
t27n	r77w	33	t27n	r76w	16
t27n	r76w	26	t27n	r76w	17
t27n	r76w	28	t27n	r76w	18
t27n	r76w	27	t27n	r77w	13
t27n	r76w	30	t27n	r77w	14
t27n	r77w	25	t27n	r77w	16
t27n	r77w	26	t27n	r77w	15
t27n	r77w	27	t27n	r77w	17
t27n	r77w	28	t27n	r77w	12
t27n	r76w	23	t27n	r77w	11
t27n	r76w	22	t27n	r77w	10
t27n	r76w	21	t27n	r77w	9
t27n	r76w	20	t27n	r77w	3
t27n	r76w	19	t27n	r77w	4

The topography consists, primarily, of the Chalk Hills and Slate Draw. Elevation ranges from 7300 feet on the ridges and hills above the drainages to, approximately, 7000 feet at the bottom of the drainages. The dominant vegetation cover in the unit consists of Mountain Big Sagebrush along the hills and wet meadow cover along creeks and draws. The primary land use is recreational hunting, camping, and OHV riding.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

Description: The 23.63 miles of primitive routes (i.e., unimproved roads and two-track trails) and .12 miles of wilderness inventory roads detract from the unit's naturalness. Examples of these primitive routes and wilderness inventory roads are demonstrated in Photos 8-11 and within the unit map. When hiking across the Chalk Hills Unit, the casual observer cannot escape the constant view of primitive routes. These primitive routes create noticeable linear intrusions and disturbances that interrupt the experience of any wilderness character briefly encountered in areas untrammelled by the works of man.

The area contains two oil and gas wells throughout the Chalk Hills Unit (see locations in unit map). When examining the status of the oil and gas wells, both of these wells were permanently abandoned in 1966 and 1967. These wells have been fully reclaimed and were not found to detract from the naturalness or to be substantially noticeable to the casual observer.

The Chalk Hills Unit also contains eight man-made reservoirs (see locations in unit map and examples in photos 2 and 7). When the casual observer encounters these man-made borrow pits and impounded reservoirs, the linear and textual contrast on the landscape attracts the attention of the observer to these modifications constructed with mechanized equipment.

The casual observer is often attracted to bodies of water while hiking. Water adds interest and diversity to the landscape. When arriving at any of the eight reservoirs, the casual observer would notice that it is not a natural lake and that they have encountered an impounded, borrow pit. The hiker seeking refreshment from clean water, would quickly notice that this "reservoir" has been contaminated by cattle operations where the water is unfit for human consumption or swimming. The numerous range improvements, including the eight reservoirs, one water well (including power lines and poles, see Photo 6), and 6.86 miles of fence (see Photo 2), were constructed, primarily, for commercial grazing operations. These improvements give the casual observer a perception that they are visitors to a cattle range rather than a wilderness untrammelled by the works of man. While the presence of cattle is compatible with a natural landscape for wilderness inventory purposes, the noticeable presence of numerous grazing-related developments in this unit is not.

In sum, the cumulative impacts on naturalness including the numerous primitive routes, wilderness inventory roads, and permanent range improvements, have impaired the naturalness in the Chalk Hills Unit to a level that is incompatible with the definitions of wilderness provided in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (incorporated in FLPMA 1976):

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

(3) Does the area or the remainder of the area (if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description:

(4) Does the area or the remainder of the area (if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description:

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational scenic or historical value)?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description:

Summary of Analysis

Area Name and/or Number: Chalk Hills WY-030-26N77W2-2012

Summary

Results of analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No
2. Does the area appear to be natural? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities of solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Check one:

_____ The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC).

__X__ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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Team members:

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